

CHARACTERIZATION IN PARADISE LOST
AS RELATED TO MILTON'S PERSONALITY

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FOREWORD

This study grew out of a very fascinating course in Seventeenth Century Poetry, taught by Professor William S. Johnson; and was undertaken at the suggestion and with the encouragement of Professor Johnson. The writer wishes here to express her gratitude for and appreciation of both Dr. Johnson's assistance and the aid and advice of Professor Josephine Burnham, who supervised the actual writing.

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CHARACTERIZATION IN PARADISE LOST
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When Osric remarked to Hamlet, "You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is," he was at once interrupted: "I dare not confess that lest I should compare with him in excellence." If we accept the theory of just appraisal of our fellowmen thus suggested, we must come to the conclusion that no truly great men can be often appreciated in this world of mediocrities. But the most commonplace mind must pay homage to greatness when encountered in unmistakable form, even while that mind recognizes that, being unable to comprehend entirely the object of its reverence, its perception must be incomplete.

One is not surprised, then, that John Milton, the great epic poet of England, has attracted the attention of so many scholars, and that less considerable people have been fascinated by the glimpses he has so generously given us of his personality. Besides the great quantity of autobiographical material that he left, Milton, consciously or unconsciously, wrote himself into all his works, dominating or coloring their treatment. His egoism was a natural, if not inevitable, result of his endowments and experiences. His genius set him apart from the rest of the world; and his physical disability, as well as his political and religious

differences, increased the distance between him and his associates. His sensitive and fastidious nature prevented him from forming many intimate friendships, and his natural reserve was increased by an early appreciation of his own gifts. As a boy, he was solitary and studious; and from his habit of meditation he developed inevitably the habit of self-analysis, a development to be expected in a day when all England was being urged to consult its conscience and to search its heart.

It is not remarkable, then, that he should have become a reflective and self-analytical man, mindful ever of his great Task-Masters' eye, and therefore striving to make the words of his mouth and the meditations of his heart acceptable in His sight. A fervent idealism pervades all that he wrote. Not only the exalted moral code that he was constantly expounding; but also his life, which he succeeded in making a noble poem, impress us with the loftiness of mind and spirit that must have distinguished him. We are, therefore, grateful for the fact that the author's spirit breathes unmistakably through his mighty verse, and find that spirit an influence for good even more than the message the poet burned to tell.

It was this challenge of Milton's personality, caught far too imperfectly, that prompted this study of the characterization in Paradise Lost, as related to Milton

himself. It is improbable that all readers will agree with the conclusions found here, nor is that particularly desirable. If the views here expressed merely stimulate a rereading of the majestic poem that suggested them, those views have served a worthy cause.

The outstanding quality of Milton's genius seems to have been intellectual. His poetry is incomparably beautiful. It has a grandeur all its own. But one cannot read many lines of it without meeting a challenge to think, and to think seriously and deeply. Aesthetically, morally, and intellectually we respond to what he says, but chiefly intellectually, as Milton himself would have preferred to have us; for he himself placed reason far above all other attributes of man and tolerated other qualities only when reason approved them.

The intelligence which warned the poet to beware the tyranny of his emotions had early manifested itself and steadily developed. His first records show him to have possessed an eager, inquiring mind and a thirst for information so great that even at a tender age he acquired the habit of studying far into the night. At the age of twenty-four he was graduated from Cambridge with the degree of M. A., and retired to his father's home in Horton, to read and study there for several years. His unusual devotion to books excited comment that forced him to defend his predilection from the charge of sinfulness. In a letter to

an unknown friend he refuted the accusation that he was indulging too much his love of learning, and called attention to the stronger appeals of ambition, gain, and pride, which should have overcome his "poor, regardless, and unprofitable sin of curiosity" had it been an idle one, concluding;

Lastly, the love of learning, as it is the pursuit of something good, it would sooner follow the more excellent and supreme good known and presented, and so be quickly diverted from the empty and fantastic chase of shadows and notions to that solid good, flowing from due and timely obedience to that command in the gospel set out by the terrible feasting of him that hid the talent.

Thus he recognized, together with his own gifts, the danger of an active mind's being lost in the "endless night of speculation", a fate which does overtake those fallen angels, who

sat on a hill retired
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate -
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then;
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdured breast
With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.¹

A passage which expands his earlier statement regarding the special government of bad angels occurs in The Christian

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1. Paradise Lost, Bk. II, l. 557 ff.

Doctrine: "Their knowledge is great, but such as tends to aggravate rather than diminish their misery."

The original excuse for losing himself in study was, we know, that of preparation for service in the church. The result of his researches however, because of his great originality of mind and his keen perceptions, was that he found himself at variance with all established faiths. In consequence, the reform most ardently desired by him was religious freedom. Saurat suggests that he accepted Puritanism partly because it offered to overthrow the old, established order, and that his religious disputes were engaged in solely for the sake of liberty of thought. His independence of opinion made civil and domestic freedom almost as desirable to him. In his Christian Doctrine he expressly states: "When the magistrate takes away this (religious) liberty, he takes away the gospel itself; he deprives the good and the bad indiscriminately of their privilege of free judgment, contrary to the spirit of the well known precept, Matthew XIII, 29,30."; and in the "Treatise of Civil Power, etc."² we read: "In religion, whatever we do under the gospel, we ought to be thereof persuaded without scruple; and we are justified by the faith we have, not by the work we do," a conclusion drawn from numerous passages in the Bible.

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His confidence in his own opinions and his firmness, if not obstinacy, in adhering to them in the face of authority and public scandal compel admiration.

Being predisposed to intellectual activities, he exalted the intellect, and out of his desire for the domination of sheer intelligence over all his actions came his need for self-mastery and freedom from any debasing passion.. Inherent values may be known only to calm, dispassionate judgement. For this reason he urged in Church Government³:

There is not that thing in the world of more grave and urgent importance throughout the whole life of man than is discipline.

Again:

Unless you will subjugate the propensity to avarice, to ambition and sensuality, and expel all luxury from yourselves and from your families, you will find that you have cherished a more stubborn and intractable despot at home than you ever encountered in the field.

"Self-mastery" meant to Milton chiefly control over the functioning of the mind, since as long as the soul, identified with Reason in the Areopagitica,⁵ is in perfect control over man no infringement of God's law is possible. Raphael warned Adam that honoring God is man's prime concern and added,⁴ "Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid."

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3. Church Government, 2 p, 441

4. Areopagitica, Bk. VIII, 167

5. " that etherèal and fifth essence, the breath of reason itself." (cf. Paradise Lost Bk. V, ll. 483 - 488)

Likewise in Book VII, 118, Raphael declared:

Such commission from above
I have received, to answer thy desire
Of knowledge within bounds, beyond abstain.
To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope
Things not revealed, which the invisible King,
Only Omniscient, hath suppressed in night,
To none communicable in Earth or Heaven.
Enough is left besides to search and know.

Hanford has listed the express fields in which Adam received instruction. He was told:

1. The origin of evil.
2. The consequences of disobedience.
3. The wonders of created matter (incomplete).
4. The necessity for intellectual humbleness.
5. The danger of random speculation.
6. His direct concern with the practical art of living.

This list indicates that knowledge was to Milton an excellent weapon against sin, but only when circumscribed. In Book IV, 774 ff; he exclaimed over the guiltless couple:

Sleep on

Blest pair! and O! yet happier if ye seek
No happier state and know to know no more.

The exact ranking of intellectual temptations with others is worthy of scanning, for a knowledge of what a man most fears always throws an illumination over his character. In Paradise Lost he was to make a study of the sin that lost for man Paradise and the favor of God. What did he decide

Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
 Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
 From their Creator, and transgress his will
 For one restraint, lords of the World besides.⁶

The fourteenth verse of Psalm Nineteen reads:

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

The interpretation that Milton would make of this mighty offence, this source of all evil, seems to be debatable. It is a commonly accepted opinion that the great transgression of Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost was "foul concupiscence," an opinion expressed, for instance, by Saurat in his book, Milton; Man and Thinker: "The fall in a certain sense was always to be lust - the deed of darkness," and Milton's character has, therefore been interpreted as fundamentally sensual. On page nineteen of the book quoted, Saurat expressly declares;

The chief passion to be conquered is sensuality in Comus, as later in Paradise Lost. The theme of Comus is no artificial choice; it corresponds to one of the deepest needs in the poet; the need to triumph over sensuality, which in itself implies sensuality.

The need to maintain harmony between passion and reason is the foundation of Milton's conception of good.

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6. Paradise Lost, Bk. I, 29 ff.

This seems a rather extreme and ungenerous statement. That Milton regarded domination of the intellect by the senses with disgust is indisputable, but the fact might as easily indicate an intolerance of brutally sensual men (who seemed especially conspicuous in the seventeenth century) as the possession of a fundamentally sensual nature.

His cheerful consciousness of rectitude forbids us to believe that his nature was strongly carnal. After proudly conquering all the youthful temptations to which the young men of his generation seemed commonly to yield, a victory which won for him the taunting nickname, "Lady of Christ's College," he lived austere throughout his adult years, proudly confident that his life, both inner and outer, was without offense. He declared in an epistle to Deodati that he was "shunning far on my path false Circe's infamous mansions." On his return from Florence he wrote:

I take God to witness that in all those places where so many things are considered lawful, I lived sound and untouched from all profligacy and vice, having this thought perpetually with me that, though I might escape the eyes of man, I certainly could not the eyes of God.

This statement would imply that he had kept himself pure mentally as well as physically, for he quotes, in Chapter XII of his Christian Doctrine, seven passages from the Scriptures warning men to avoid sinning in their thoughts, declaring that evil concupiscence is the first type of sin,

and that: "The second thing in sin after evil concupiscence is the crime itself, or the act of sinning, which is commonly called Actual Sin. This may be incurred not only by actions commonly ~~so~~ called, but also by words and thoughts, and even by the omission of good actions."

He developed a delight in fastidious chastity early in his life, and it seems improbable that voluptuousness could ever have distinguished him. Observing the difference between himself and the grosser men around him he was able to say:

And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure
Instruct me, for Thou knowest⁷

and when we remember his statement in Comus⁸:

So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That when a soul is found sincerely so
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving afar each thing of sin and guilt
And tell her things that no gross ear
can hear.

we understand how Milton dared to describe the Almighty Father, whom none but the pure in heart may see.

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7. Paradise Lost, Bk. I, ll. 16 - 19.

8. Comus, 543 ff.

Nowhere are his essential fineness and nobility of character more severely tested than in the very passages upon which his critics base their arguments. To the pure all things are pure, and Milton, lacking the sensuality of which he is accused, permitted God and His angels to speak without apology of phases of living commonly considered base, in passages which no poet less spiritual could have attempted without a suggestion of impropriety.

One of the passages which we may interpret to strengthen a belief that the fall of man came through intellectual and spiritual rather than sensual temptation is found in Book VIII, l. 321 ff. God warned Adam:

Of every tree that in the Garden grows,
 Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth
 But of the tree whose operation brings
 Knowledge of Good and Ill, which I have set,
 The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
 Amid the Garden by the Tree of Life-
 Remember what I warn thee - shun to taste
 And shun the bitter consequence; for know
 The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
 Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die,
 From that day mortal.

Milton would not permit God to threaten in vain, even though His heart relented after the Fall, and since,

physically, Adam and Eve were living at the close of the poem, we must conclude that Milton had in mind some specialized meaning of the term "die"; and such a conclusion is verified by the chapter "of the Punishment of Sin", in the first book of The Christian Doctrine, where, after dividing death into four degrees and enumerating the first, guiltiness, he calls the second:

"Spiritual death, by which is meant the loss of divine grace and that of innate righteousness. . . . And this death took place not only on the very day, but at the very moment of the fall. They who are delivered from it are said to be regenerated, or to be born again. . . . The death consists, first, in the loss, or at least in the obscuration to a great extent of that right reason which enabled men to discern the chief good, and in which consisted, as it were, the life of the understanding. . . . It consists secondly in that deprivation of righteousness and liberty to do good, and in that slavish subjection to sin and the devil, which constitutes, as it were, the death of the will."

After the Fall, therefore, Adam and Eve were "dead in sin," (an expression Milton uses in his tractate of Predestination). Their spiritual essence was altered. The command had been primarily to Reason, which had sickened at once upon their disobedience. From that moment their bodies became mortal, or subject to death.

In her article in Studies in Philology for October, 1924, Miss Marjory H. Nicolson showed how the Fall resulted in a fall from preeminence of Reason and in a reversal of the natural faculties in the original man. This fall of Reason is The Fall:

For Understanding ruled not, and the Will
 Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
 To sensual appetite, who from beneath,
 Usurping over sovran Reason, claimed
 Superior sway.

In Book XII, 82 ff., Michael, addressing Adam, commented upon the disorders that were to follow the first sin:

Yet know withal,
 Since thy original lapse, true liberty
 Is lost, which always with right reason dwells,
 Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being.
 Reason in Man obscured or not obeyed
 Immediately inordinate desires
 And upstart passions catch the government
 From Reason and to servitude reduce
 Man till then free.

In Milton's discussion Of The Fall of Our First Parents and of Sin, he defines sin as the transgression of the law, giving I John III, 4, as his authority and declares:

By the law is here meant, in the first place, that rule of conscience which is innate and engraven upon the mind of man; secondly the special command which proceeded out of the mouth of God. It comprehended at once distrust in the divine veracity, and a proportionate credulity in the assurances of Satan.

Later he adds that:

evil concupiscence, that law of sin, was not only bred naturally in us, but dwelt also in Adam after the fall, in whom it could not properly be called original.

Satan and his friends, supreme types of sin, have little sensuality. They represent disbelief in God's power and authority, and illustrate the fall of Reason when the intellect rejects faith in Him. To a student of philosophy, endowed with exceptional mental powers, the peril of challenging Christian theology would seem far more immediate and more awful than abasement through the feelings. Intellectual error would appear more deadly than physical or emotional sin. How Milton repelled temptation to such sin we glimpse in Abdiel's passionate defense of the suggestion that God was unjust⁹ to bind with laws the free

Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou
dispute

With Him the points of liberty, who made

Thee what thou art?

.....

9. Paradise Lost, Book V, ll. 822.

Trained strictly to fear and to love God, he must yet have experienced those doubts which even lesser intellects have had to battle. It is even possible that, had he lived in the twentieth century, when religious feeling is not so strong and religious training not so intense, he himself might have become - at least for a time - an agnostic, a challenger of the revelations of God.

The tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was described as tall, compelling Adam and Eve to exert their utmost reach to pluck the fruit. The beasts desired and longed to taste of its fruit, but only the wily serpent could wind his way up to the branches, and he, we know, had "trusted to have equalled the Most High if He opposed." Moreover, God, in Book III, 203ff., described Adam's sin in the following words:

Man disobeying,
Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins
Against the high supremacy of Heaven
Affecting Godhead, and so losing all.

Eating of the fruit implied, first, a distrust of God's goodness, and, second, a disbelief in God's fatherhood. Satan had argued:

if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?
God therefore cannot hurt ye and be just;

.....

Not just; not God; not feared then, nor
obeyed.

Your fear itself of death removes the fear.

Why then was this forbid? Why, but to awe,

Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,

His worshippers?¹⁰

Being unrebuked, he had gone further;

The Gods are first, and that advantage use

On our belief that all from them proceeds.

I question it; for this fair Earth I see,

Warmed by the sun, producing every kind;

Them nothing:¹¹

By speculation he proves that "death is really a change into Godhead", demonstrating that since his fall his intellect has become perverted and his conception of God impaired.

Just as Milton reasoned from the passages in the Bible that the sin of doubting God's fatherhood is the sin unto death, so he believed salvation through faith to be man's hope of immortality. In the tractate Of Saving Faith, he declares, "Saving faith is a full persuasion operated in

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10. Paradise Lost, Bk. IX, 697 ff.

11. Ibid., Bk. IX, 718.

us through the gift of God, whereby we believe, on the sole authority of the promise itself, that whatsoever things He has promised in Christ are ours, and especially the grace of eternal life"; and in Paradise Lost Michael prophesies the atonement by Christ's sacrifice:

Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption, and that his obedience
Imputed becomes theirs by faith.¹²

and warns Adam to "the benefit embrace by faith not void of works"., while the second coming of Christ was to be provoked by the fact that

Truth shall retire, bestuck with slanderous
darts

And works of Faith rarely be found.

The parallel between the birth of Sin in Heaven and the origin of Pallas Athene in Greek mythology cannot be overlooked. Both sprang full-grown from the heads of their fathers. Nor did the union of Satan with Sin savor of incest anymore than did Adam's relationship with Eve, a guiltless one. Sin sprang from Satan's forehead, and Eve from Adam's rib.

Evidently Milton did not share the childlike belief that sex was first discovered after the Fall. The nuptials of Adam and Eve were celebrated by all nature and were free from blame. Moreover, when Adam asked Raphael¹³

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12. Paradise Lost, Bk. XII, l. 407.

13. Ibid., Bk. VIII, 155 ff.

Love not the Heavenly Spirits, and how their love
Express they - by looks only, or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?

the angel responded "with a smile that glowed celestial rosy-
red, Love's proper hue":

Let it suffice thee that thou knows't
Us happy, and without Love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
(And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
In eminence, and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars.
Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, union of pure with pure
Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with
soul.¹⁴

Why, then, was the relationship of our first parents
so sinful after they had yielded to Satan's wishes? And why
should commentators decide "The fall, in a certain sense, was
always to be lust - the deed of darkness"? Lust is intro-
duced into Paradise only after the Fall, and in order to con-
trast the pure and noble relationship between the innocent
pair and the debased guiltiness of the sinners.

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14. Paradise Lost, Bk. VIII, 620 ff.

Milton's ideal of marriage was probably based upon the Bible itself. God, in his creation, had said to earth's inhabitants "Be fruitful and multiply", and afterward He "saw everything he had made; and, behold, it was very good." Consequently Milton was no advocate of celibacy, but was ever seeking his ideal of perfect living in marriage. His attitude was that the highest type of happiness may be found in conjugal love (a conception inspired partly by the ritual of marriage). In his Apology for Smectymnuus, Milton thus expresses his theory of the relationship among love, virtue, and knowledge:

Thus from the laureate fraternity of poets, riper years and the ceaseless round of studies led me to the shady spaces of philosophy; but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato and his equal, Xenophon: where, if I should tell what I learned of chastity and love, I mean of that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy (the rest are cheated with a thick, intoxicating potion, which a certain sorceress, the abuser of love's name carries about) and how the first and chiefest office of love ends in the soul, producing those two happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue.

...
Nor did I slumber over that place (in Holy Scripture) expressing such high rewards of ever accompanying the Lamb, with those celestial songs to others inapprehensible, but not to those who were not defiled with women, which doubtless means fornication; for marriage must not be called a defilement".

In his book, Puritanism in the Poetical Works of Milton, F. W. Robertson Butler, declares¹⁵

It may be fitting here to note that this purity of heart and life was ever one of the chief traits of Milton's character. Though far from being prudish (usually a trait of unclean minds) he could claim equality with the most saintly in his regard for the honour of men and the purity of women ...

His early misalliance left him no memory he cared to cherish; but of his second wife his recollections are more than coldly respectful:

My late espoused saint
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind;
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined.
Sonnet XVIII

His views on man's supremacy, to be noted in several places in his poems, did not, even in the Tracts on Divorce, prevent him from acknowledging the happiness, in intellectual converse and in piety, which a man may find in a woman he loves.

Not less beautiful a type of pure womanhood (than the Lady in Comus, who answers to the Puritan ideal of womanhood) is pictured in Eve, "the virgin pure and wise." In Adam's first speech he begins with his love to her; and the same sentiment is recurrent all through the poem - the Puritan sentiment of reverence for true womanhood which is typified by:

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15. Butler, F. W. Robertson, Puritanism In the Poetical Works of Milton, p. 12.

Daughter of man and God, accomplast Eve,
 With goddess-like demeanour forth she went
 Not unattended, for on her as queen
 A group of winning graces waited still.

In the description of Eve, as in the beauties of the garden, the aesthetic side of Milton's nature found exquisite expression. One remembers the letter he wrote to Deodati in 1637:¹⁶

What besides God has resolved concerning me, I know not, but this at least; He has instilled into me, if into anyone, a vehement love of the beautiful. Not with so much labor, as the fables have it, is Ceres said to have sought her daughter, Proserpina, as it is my habit, day and night, to seek for this idea of the beautiful, as for a certain image of supreme beauty, through all the forms and shapes of things (for many are the shapes divine.)

That this love was not voluptuous, Milton's association of it with God's providence, and his sense of unreproved enjoyment of it would show.

I do not believe that he ever outgrew his response to beauty. But he was always testing that response to be sure that Reason controlled it. Consequently, in Paradise Lost, the Garden was luxuriously beautiful, but Man was placed over it to control and regulate it - not merely to enjoy it.

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16. Milton, Letters, (VII).

In fact, he could enjoy it only so long as he refused it domination. The chief attention of Adam and Eve was given to pruning and training the beauties of their domain. In like manner, Adam had to be master of his response to feminine beauty. He was expressly warned that when delighting in the attractiveness of his help-meet, he must weigh her worth with his own, and so heighten his pleasure in her fairness by the reflection that all her exquisite charm must be subordinate to the fine faculty of reason he possessed.

Adam's ardent devotion to Eve was thereby defended from a charge of uxoriousness, a condition which Milton would have considered intolerably unmanly; and the moral is again taught that Reason must be constantly preferred, if man is to avoid all sin.

From the medieval idea that the body was evil, the natural enemy of the soul, Milton was notably free. Always he insisted upon the domination of the flesh by the spirit; but under control all natural appetites were good and pure. The angel visitor to the Garden of Eden enjoyed the fruits of Paradise, and when his host marvelled at his "keen dispatch of real hunger" explained:¹⁷

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17. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, 469 ff.

O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return
 If not depraved from good, created all
 Such to perfection: one first matter all
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
 Proportioned to each kind.

...

And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps
 Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit.

This theory of the evolution of physical matter to
 spiritual may have had its inception in the translation of
 Enoch and Elijah into Heaven, physically and without knowing
 Death. It is reflected again in Book III, 311 ff., where
 God, addressing Christ, declares:

Because in thee

Love hath abounded more than glory abounds
 Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
 With thee thy manhood also to this throne.
 Here shall thou sit, incarnate, here shall reign
 Both God and Man; Son both of God and Man.

Since the body then is capable of etherialization
 and is an element through which God could work as well as
 through the spirit, enjoyment of food is one of the delights
 of Heaven,¹⁸

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18. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, 630 ff.

Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they
turned

Desirous: all in circles as they stood,
Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
With Angel's food.

Even in the presence of God, Adam was conscious of a desire to pluck and eat the tempting fruits of Paradise.

With the elevation of the sense of taste went, however, a stern demand for temperance, needed after the Fall, that echoes the arguments of The Lady in Comus. Michael warned Adam:¹⁹ "the Earth shall bear more than enough that temperance may be tried". Adam exclaimed:

"Is there no other way, besides
These painful passages how we may come
To death and mix with our connatural dust?"
"There is," said Michael, "if thou will observe
The rule of not too much, by temperance taught,
In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking
from thence

Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight."

The reader wonders, remembering that Milton had to pay some attention to diet at the time he wrote Paradise Lost, and that the disease of which he died, gout, is commonly attributed to injudicious eating, whether the passage was

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19. Paradise Lost, Bk. XI, 805 ff.

was prompted by painful experience. Shortly before his death (according to Christopher Milton) the poet, being especially pleased at preparation for his dinner of something he very well liked, exclaimed: "God have mercy, Betty, I see thou wilt perform according to thy promise in providing me with such dishes as I think fit whilst I live, and when I die thou knowst that I have left thee all."

We have, however, the authority of Aubrey for our belief that he was a temperate man. All of these impressions of Milton's personality are deepened and enlarged by a careful analysis of the characters he created in his Paradise Lost, and a comparison of their attributes with those of their creator.

SATAN

It has been suggested that all Milton's evil characters represent vices he feared in his own heart, but it seems reasonable to believe that those fears arose from knowledge that such sins were heinous as well as from a strong consciousness of an innate liability to commit some of them. Satan, the supreme type of sin, represents defects of the spirit. He manifests obdurate pride, high disdain, steadfast hate, moral cowardice, a sense of injured merit, the spirit of revenge, ambition, envy, hypocrisy, courage never to submit or yield. For this last quality we might feel some admiration, did not Satan himself explain it:¹

But say I could repent and could obtain
 By act of grace my former state; how soon
 Would highth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
 What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant
 Vows made in pain as violent and void
 (For never can true reconcilement grow
 Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep)
 Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
 And heavier fall, so I should purchase dear
 Short intermission, bought with double smart.
 This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
 From granting he, as I from begging peace,
 All hope excluded thus.

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1. Paradise Lost, Bk. IV, 93 ff.

He has no choice save rebellion, since he is still a prey to the "high thoughts" which overthrew him. Prevenient grace descending did not "remove the stony" from his heart. It is interesting to compare the foregoing passing with Milton's comment on Jeremiah V, 3: "They have made their faces harder than a rock", in Of the Providence of God:

The hardening of the heart therefore is usually the last punishment inflicted on inveterate wickedness and unbelief in this life.

Speaking later in the same essay "with regard to the blinding of the understanding" he declared: "To this view of Providence must be referred what is called temptation, whereby God either tempts men, or permits them to be tempted by the devil or his agents."

Satan's sin being intellectual, his punishment is made to conform to it. He is cursed with restlessness, hopelessness, sorrow, inability to repent. Hell becomes a condition of eternal rebellion against the just authority of God (Reason). In describing the physical aspects of Hell, a place of brimstone ~~and~~ various kinds of fire, Milton followed tradition: but Satan seemed to experience no discomfort in the flame and heat of the Sun, where an angel from the Empyrean resided. And in Book IV, 18ff., we are told:

Honor and doubt distract
 His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
 The hell within him, for within him Hell
 He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
 One step, no more than from himself can fly
 By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair
 That slumbered.

The despairing angel, after lamenting that pride and worse
 ambition had thrown him down, continued²

Lifted up so high
 I'dsained subjection and thought one step higher
 Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
 That debt immense of endless gratitude.

...

Which way shall I fly?
 Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
 And in the lowest deep, a lower deep,
 Still threatening to devour me, opens wide,
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
 Oh then, at last relent! Is there no place
 Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
 None left But by submission, and that word
 Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
 Among the Spirits beneath.

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2. Paradise Lost, Bk. IV, 49 ff.

By his own confession, then, Satan's bombastic utterances are not the expression of a mighty will, but of recognized weakness, hypocritical - the vainglorious vaporings of a fool. He cannot repent, for that inability is part of his punishment. He must continue heaping on himself damnation, and deserves no praise for his determined course. His very flight to Earth, which seems at first so admirably attempted, was undertaken for the sake of glory, a concession to his vanity, and is later contrastable with the sacrifice by Christ for love. He admits his selfishness in his scornful exclamation:³

Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell
Though hither doomed?

He is a moral coward. Even in Heaven Abdiel, who, alone, in the very heart of the enemy's camp, dared to defy the assembled legions, is his moral superior.

The fact that we feel a reluctant admiration for Satan is not the author's fault, but is due to our misunderstanding of his concept. Milton would not be apt to lose himself in admiration of Satan's corrupted virtue at the very time he is so boldly indicating the deadly error of Satan's whole conception of himself and his subsequent weakness.

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3. Paradise Lost, Bk. IV, 889 ff.

He sees Satan eye to eye as an equal - or as one superior to him. It is Milton who feels the scorn and mockery attributed to God. He could feel no sympathy in a rebellion against Right Reason. In fact, Satan's rejected duty in Heaven, to sing the praises of his creator, was the very program in which Milton's poetic genius found greatest delight, and to which he had early dedicated his life.

In picturing Satan, the poet was called upon to draw a personification of consummate evil - the moral opposite of good. God's own conception of good had been incarnated in the Christ. Evil, then, would naturally be represented by the absence of Christ's virtues, or, actively, by their opposites. The Saviour was resigned, meek, loving, unselfish, obedient to God. He loved truth and forbearance. His constant plea was for humility, and his example gave highest proof of it.

Satan, on the other hand, must be proud, self-centered, rebellious, great in vanity, in spite, in unreasonable opposition to good and all-powerful forces. He is a supreme type of unintelligent insurgency, of empty boasting, of hypocrisy, of self-deception. To be sure, he is, at first introduction, no less than arch-angel ruined; but from our first glimpse of him he loses more and more his transcendent greatness. Our first awe of his size and qualities is untempered by a knowledge of the greater

magnitude of the other inhabitants of Heaven and is, possibly, also colored by the greater power to attract of evil over good. Not lofty enough in spirit to be charmed by pure goodness, we exclaim with Guinevere, "the low sun makes the color."

The size of the loyal angels does not impress us equally. Milton does not emphasize it probably for two reasons. Either Adam would have been dwarfed by it, or we should conceive of him as of such heroic build that our identification of ourselves with him - a desirable thing - would have been difficult. Besides, Milton prefers to stress the power of goodness and virtue, rather than of might, to subdue The Adversary.

It is, then, Abdiel, rather than Satan, who "superbly expresses Milton's own passion for liberty." In the conversation between Satan and Abdiel⁴ compare Satan's mocking words:

At first I thought that Liberty and Heaven
To heavenly souls had been all one; but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
Ministering Spirits, trained up in feast and song:
Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of heaven -
Servility with freedom to contend.

with Abdiel's scornful reply;

.....

4. Paradise Lost, Bk. VI, 164 ff.

This is servitude

To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled.

Satan's original immensity was probably emphasized, also, to make him worthy of his victory over Eve and Adam. In fact, admirable as Adam is represented to be, we feel that Satan (even degenerated) is an unfairly powerful adversary for him. Gaining in guile what he had lost in strength, The Prince of Hell, was able to deceive even the seraph set on the sun to guard creation.

It is curious that one attribute of the arch-fiend should have been so prominent a trait of Milton - pride. I doubt, however, whether the poet recognized the trait in himself as sinful.

The angel advised Adam:

Oft-times nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well managed.⁵

Convinced that his pride had a justifiable basis, the poet probably felt it was approved by all the saints in Heaven. I know of no instance in which he lamented his possession of the quality.

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5. Paradise Lost, Bk. VIII, 571 ff.

Lucifer's pride developed ambition. Ambition led to envy. Envy resulted in rebellion. He won over his next in command by insinuations which were effective because the latter, reposing confidence in his chief, was off his guard. The troops, hitherto obedient to God's will expressed through Lucifer, were less able to reason than were their superiors. Corrupted by commands infused with ambiguous words to sound or taint integrity, they were blinded by Lucifer's greatness to the possibility of greater (or almighty) power. Only Abdiel was proof against the leader's persuasiveness. The others permitted themselves to listen. The seeds of disobedience lay in their failure to repulse his suggestions at once. Their Fall must result. In every case, the perversion is not sensual but intellectual. Emboldened by his apparent success Lucifer proceeded to his fatal sin, a denial of the fatherhood of God:

We know no time when we were not as now,
 Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
 By our own quickening power.⁶

Overthrown, an outcast from Heaven, his name blotted out from its records, Satan turned from cowardly whining that God was to be blamed for his condition - inasmuch as by concealing the extent of His power He had tempted rebellion - to the empty vaunting that Heaven was not lost, that the

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6. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, 859 ff.

fall of the angels would only make their rise the more glorious. He represented himself as advanced in foresight and experience by the Fall.- a statement either foolish or hypocritical, His stubborn and despairing spite, which drove him through the hazardous regions of chaos, was unjustifiable, as even his impaired intelligence granted:

Now was his service hard.

What could be less so than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks?
How due? ...

... Lifted up so high
I 'sdained subjection and thought one step higher
Would set me highest.⁷

Recognizing that he now must "of force" believe (god) almighty, he soon fatuously called himself and his followers "Terror of Heaven, though fallen". His lying to Uriel, his strategy in getting into the garden, his devices of the toad-shape and that of the serpent - all bear witness to a consciousness of weakness. He was afraid to meet even Adam in argument:

Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh
Whose higher intellectual more I shun
And strength, of courage haughty and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;

.....

7. Paradise Lost, Bk. IV, 45 ff.

Foe not formidable, exempt from wound.

I not; so much hath Hell debased and pain

Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven.

Thus Satan's essence developed retrogressively, as Adam's, if he had repelled sin, was to have progressed. This transformation of the body by the soul is reminiscent of the brutish change that the followers of Comus underwent and finds its climax in the dramatic transformation of all the population of Hell into serpents, demonstrating that still in Milton's opinion

The soul grows clotted by contagions,

Embodies, and imbrutes till she quite lose

The divine property of her first being.

(Comus)

Satan's reasoning powers are so far impaired that he can convince himself he had "in one night freed from servitude inglorious wellnigh half the Angelic Name." He childishly believes that by marring in one day that which had required six days for creation he would demonstrate power superior to the creator's. After consoling his pride with empty boastings, he speaks of his fear of the flaming ministers who watch and tend their earthly charge, an admission of inferiority, and laments that he must now be "constrained into a beast and mixed with bestial slime."

Planning for the Fall, he muses:

One Fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called
Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?
Suspicious, reasonless. (forgetting that even
Uriel had spoken of "the wisdom that brought them
(God's work) forth, but hid their causes deep")

Why should their Lord
Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?
Can it be death? And do they only stand
By ignorance? ...

... Hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know and to reject
Envious commands invented with design
To keep them low whom knowledge might exalt
Equal to gods.⁸

Satan believed that God would immediately destroy his creation
should he find it on such a path of development - probably
through fear of a second rival:

Aspiring to be such (Gods)

They taste and die. What likelier can ensue?

Then he started his campaign. First winning esteem
by his assertions of superior advantages, he suggested that
Eve question established law. Gradually he warped Eve's
power to reason. She was unable to detect the guile and

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fraud in his argument. Her allegiance to Man first shaken, she was ready to deny her allegiance to God through Man.

All of Satan's wrong is done in the name of Freedom, a condition dear to Milton, It was of tremendous importance to him that he be able to distinguish true from false liberty. In Paradise Lost, as in Sampson Agonistes, "freedom to do right" is the theme.

"Honest liberty is the greatest foe to dishonest
license"

"None can love freedom heartily but good men".

It is interesting to note, in passing how carefully Death is kept distinct from the Creator of the Universe. If, as Milton declared, God created all things out of his own substance, Satan was a part of the essence of God. Satan degenerated sufficiently to bear Sin, but was too near the nature of God to bear Death. Sin, at first so close to the creator of all good, was lovely to behold until, degenerating to the degree that she was able to bear Death, she became deformed and found herself beset by the gnawing perplexities Sin and Death generate. Death is thus reasonably far removed from God, whose nature was Life and who should never have been held directly responsible for Death. Yet the statement "without him was no thing made" is not refuted.

THE OTHER ANGELS

Milton's conception of the other angels is less definite than that of his other characters. Less is said of them in his great source-book, The Bible. One recognizes the uncertain speculation of his imagination in Raphael's ambiguous words:

"though what if Earth be but the shadow of

Heaven,

and things therein each to other like more than
on Earth is thought."¹

This theory must have appealed to Milton strongly, because his reasoning had already suggested to him, The Christian Doctrine, Book 1, Chapter 2:

If God be said "to have made man in his own image, after his likeness", Gen. 1, 26, and that too not only as to his soul, but also as to his outward form (unless the same words have different significations here and in Gen. V, 3, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image") and if God habitually assigns to himself the members and form of man, why should we be afraid of attributing to him what he attributes to himself, so long as what is imperfection and weakness when viewed in reference to ourselves be considered as most complete and excellent when imputed to God.

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1. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, 574 ff.

This statement combined with Raphael's conjecture led Newton to conclude that Milton inclined to the belief that the whole fabric of the universe was a pattern of the invisible. It was an admirable device to have Raphael explain:

And what surmounts the reach
Of human sense I shall delineate so
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best -²

because Milton, as well as Raphael must adapt his terms to human comprehensionibility, and so the human limitations of the poet's imagination are hidden. Another touch of speculation occurs in Book VIII, ff., when the angels, hymning before the Creator sing of :

the glassy sea
Of amplitude almost immense, with stars
Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
Of destined habitation.

The poet fell into a curious contradiction, when he said of the angels:

All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear
All intellect, all sense.³

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2. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, 571 ff.

3. Ibid. Bk. VI, 350 ff.

Yet because Uriel's back was turned, Satan was able to change his shape and prepare to deceive the arch-angel. There is another passage that surprises us. In Book V, 375, the Archangel Raphael indulged in a "social fib". God had said:

Go, therefore, half this day, as friend with
friend,

Converse with Adam in what bower or shade

Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired.

Yet Raphael represented himself to Adam as a free agent, saying:

Lead on, then, where thy bower
O'er shades; for these mid hours, till evening
rise,

I have at will.

In the angel's admonition to Adam, is the superior masculine attitude:

Weigh her with thyself;
Then value, oft-times nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right,
Well managed. Of that skill the more thou
know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
And to realities yield all her shows.

One recognizes Milton's sense of superiority by reason of his sex. Adam was exhorted to dominate his mate. After the fall, Bk. X, 148, Christ declared:

Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee
And for thee, whose perfection far excelled
Hers in all real dignity. Adorned
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
Were such as under government well seemed.

Even Eve had rebuked him, finding excuse for her mistake in the complaint, "Being as I am, why didst thou not, the Head, command me absolutely not to go"? One feels sorry for the poet that he should have been forced by the tradition of his story to permit his ideal man such weakness, and one wonders if he did not feel the familiarity of his own home circle somewhat of a strain, with so many female dependents to subdue. One must sympathize also with poor Adam, so much concerned with his dictatorship that he could not prefer his wife's gifts to his own, a condition from which happier Eve was more generously exempt.

In Raphael's description of the battle array of the angels, their marches, hostings, banners, trumpets, sentries, etc., there is a curious mingling of chivalric

pageantry (such as Milton had once considered as material for his great epic) and the poet's own personal experience with warfare. One remembers the psalm-singing Roundheads when one reads of the angels' being inspired by music to heroic ardour, to adventurous deeds.

Abdiel affords us two glimpses of his Creator. Milton, like Abdiel, when surrounded by threatening adversaries, had resisted the current of popular opinion. England, like the rebellious angels, had rejected the golden scepter of self-government for the iron rod to bruise and break of royal prerogative. And, like Abdiel, Milton seemed alone in his allegiance:

Among the faithless faithful only he
 Among innumerable false, unmoved,
 Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
 His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal
 Nor number nor example with him wrought
 To swerve from truth or change his constant

mind

Though single. From amidst them forth he passed
 Long way through hostile scorn.⁴

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4. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, 898.

In God's words of approval, Milton anticipated his own future commendation and perhaps expressed his hope of retaliation; for, as already noted, revenge was not necessarily, to him, a sin:

Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintained
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word far mightier than they in arms,
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence; for this was all thy care -
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse. The easier conquest now
Remains thee - aided by this host of friends
Back on thy foes more glorious to return
Than, scorned, thou didst depart.⁵

With the fallen angels, Milton had less in common. They are all distinguished by intellectual decay. Satan reveals his degeneration in almost every opinion he expresses, but chiefly in the fact that he is no longer God-fearing. With the warping of his great reasoning powers, his mighty potentialities for good are converted into destructive

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5. Paradise Lost, Bk, VI, 29.

possibilities. Molock's blind rebellion against his pains could only increase them; Belial is industrious to vice, but timorous and slothful to nobler deeds. He it is who most enjoys speculation, nor wishes to lose

Though full of pain, this intellectual being,

Those thoughts that wander through eternity.

Mammon wishes them to capitalize their loss of God's providence, to rejoice in an opportunity to live to themselves; while Beelzebub displays political leadership perverted by wrong choice of allegiance. The last named must have been especially hated by Milton, inasmuch as Beelzebub is made second in command after Satan. Mulciber would represent decadent art. His position among the devils is not especially influential. On the whole, the fallen angels seem more interesting than the perfect ones, just as Milton's picture of Hell seems more satisfactory than his idea of Heaven.

GOD.

Saurat found the whole presentation of Christ in Book I, Paradise Regained vitiated by intolerable self-consciousness. But how else would he expect Milton to imagine Christ's personality than by interpretation of his own. An average man's opinion of his fellow men is colored by his own character; a poet is always inclined to project himself into his ideal creations; and Milton was, as we have already noted, especially prone to recreate himself in his poetry (as well as in his prose).

From *Samson Agonistes*, who cries¹:

Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed

As of a person separate to God,

Designed for great exploits, if I must die

Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out?

to the Christ, who reflects:

When I was yet a child no childish play

To me was pleasing: all my mind was set

Serious to learn and know, and thence to do

What might be public good; myself I thought

Born to that end, born to promote all truth

All righteous things.

.....

1. Samson Agonistes, ll. 30, ff.

The poet sings of himself, and in the character of God in Paradise Lost, one may reasonably anticipate discovering the poet's highest concept of his own character; for he was constantly trying to approximate the virtues of perfection, and - by purification of his heart - to achieve his ideal of godliness. He had written concerning the burning of the Ephesian books by St. Paul's converts:

To govern well is to train up a nation in true wisdom and virtue, and that which springs from thence - magnanimity (take heed of that) and that which is our beginning, regeneration, and happiest end, likeness to God, which in one word we call godliness.

His care from his earliest youth had been to encompass in his own character all the virtues, upon the grounds that "He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem".

That the poet believed himself able to "apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better" is nowhere better disclosed than in the kinship between his own character and that of "God".

It would seem that in Milton's very effort to interpret the Almighty lay the seeds of the presumptuous sins that destroyed Adam and Lucifer, and the choosing of

his theme, "to justify the ways of God to man", which presumed his ability to understand the motives of the All-Highest, is significant of his moral and intellectual pride. Possibly his own experiences had intensified the need, for him, of such an explanation. For Milton, apparently conscious of absolute rectitude as far as his conscience could judge, had fallen upon evil days and evil tongues. He had dedicated his genius and lost his eyesight in a cause which he considered holy, and God had allowed his sacrifice to be made in vain. It is not surprising that he would wish to pluck out the heart of God's mystery, in his need to understand God's ways.

In his first book of A Treatise On Christian Doctrine, he had assembled all intimations of the character of God that he could discover in the Scriptures, and the character in Paradise Lost is a composite of the impressions he had received.

For the most part, Milton is influenced by the Hebraic conception of God in the Old Testament. The Deity seems often far removed from the Father of Christ's revelations, circumscribed by the finite idealism of his portrayer; The Eternal is reduced to a size our minds can comprehend, a necessary result of his being made a character in the

poem. Milton should have known better than to attempt to explain Omniscience.

At the same time, brought so dangerously near the Deity, we become his judges; and our human fault of arrogance, untempered by angelic wisdom and understanding, prompts us to resent his autocratic power. His complete control and our own absolute dependence, which had seemed right and desirable, a source of satisfaction, become - once we are elevated to a critical position, something to resent and to rebel against. It is not hard for us to develop a lurking sympathy for Satan. We really do not care for humility, anyway. Milton, very probably, was free from this error; or it is possible that he was able so to identify himself with his actor that he was unconscious of any opportunity one might make to criticize it.

For the Divinity sounds frigid, stern, derisive, mocking, proud, intolerant of inferior weakness, almost tyrannical, unduly sensitive, jealous of His glory. He condescends to be concerned as to Satan's opinion of Him, fearing Satan may deem His glory at all diminished by the loss of His rebellious forces. In fact, a strong motive for saving man is to avoid Satan's ridicule, as well as to justify Himself, (a concession which reminds us how sensitive Milton was - always - to the scorn of his con-

temporaries). He is not even humanly magnanimous. The attributes seem repellent in one possessing all wisdom and all power, however much we might forgive any combination of them in an old, defeated, disabled man of genius. The resentful hatred that expresses itself in sneers at the weak and fallen we condemn in our fellow-men, yet the Son exclaims:¹

Mighty Father, thou thy foes
Justly hast in derision, and secure
Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain
and when God saw:²

Rebellion rising - saw in whom, how spread
Among the Sons of Morn, what multitudes
Were banded to oppose his high decree;

he smiles. How can we reconcile his mockery of deluded, sinning ones with the tender, fatherly love we presume Him to have? He enjoyed the entertainment human errors afforded. In Book VIII, 75 ff., Milton declares:

Or if they list to try
Conjecture, he his fabric of the Heav'ns
Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide.

(reminding one of the astronomical controversy of Milton's period) and in Book XII, 58 ff: the poet describes God's

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1. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, 714 ff.

punishment of the builders of the Tower of Babel, saying
He "in derision sets upon their tongues a various spirit":

till, hoarse and all in rage,
As mocked they storm. Great laughter was in
Heaven,

And looking down to see the hubbub strange
And hear the din.

Thus the old idea of "Sport for the gods" becomes
sport for God. This kind of malicious enjoyment of another's
misery, we have hoped is confined to creatures of our world,
and we are not surprised to read concerning the poet who
found it admissible in the Creator the following anecdote
from the pen of Jonathan Richardson:

Milton had a servant who was a very
honest, silly fellow, and a zealous and
constant follower of those teachers(i.e.
non-conformists). When he came from the
meeting his master would frequently ask
him what he had heard, and divert himself
with ridiculing their fooleries, or, it
may be, the poor fellow's understanding:
both one and t'other probably. However
this was so grievous to the good creature
that he left his services upon it."

Part of Satan's punishment had an absolute pettiness
and spite natural to weakness and unbecoming the Lord of
Heaven:

The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss.³

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3. Paradise Lost, Bk. III, 523 ff.

Abdiel felt scorn for his fellow angels, not grief nor loving reproach - although how an untainted celestial spirit would regard sin staggers the imagination, since all our emotional responses are conditioned by our frailties.

The grim jest of causing the Dominic and Franciscan monks to be blown ten thousand leagues away, just as they lifted their feet to enter Saint Peter's wicket seems more Miltonic than Godlike, while Milton's consciousness of worth unrewarded on earth must have found expression in Book III, 450 ff., when he said of the Limbo of Vanity:

All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find
Fit retribution, empty as their deeds.

Indeed "God" seems to permit himself very little pity and tolerance. Accusing Adam - who had lacked even those strong incentives to do right, an understanding of the nature of evil and an understanding of the nature of punishment - He declares:⁴ "Ingrate, he had of me all he could have," yet "God" knew that none of Man's powers, not even his

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4. Paradise Lost, Bk. III, 97 ff.

reason were strong enough to oppose an angel's - even a fallen angel's - without divine aid - and that aid he, obviously withheld. His long explanation itself would indicate a recognition that his case was weak.

For, according to the story, "God", after the rebellion in heaven, found himself possessed of vindictive and ruthless enemies. Foreseeing its destruction, he created a frail, new world with two human creatures, dear to him but imperfectly protected. He permitted his arch-enemy, more potent than they to ascend from the pit of hell to subject them to perversion and immediate degradation, and their children to inexpressible suffering and wretchedness in order to gratify his own appetite for glory - a glory that would be enhanced by his grace to them and by his sacrifice of his son.

The Son, being made a separate entity, becomes almost a victim of his father's nature. The Father takes pride in his creation: the Father is just. The Son, loving his father, must sacrifice himself in order to reconcile that pride and that sense of justice.

Nor do we always recognize "God's" dealing with the angels as just. The loyal angels, for whom no higher evolution seems indicated as possible, seem unfairly treated at the time of the war in heaven. For God, the source of

all strength, had sent them out to wage hopeless war, reserving for his son, alone, absolute power to overcome Satan. He who "out of smallest things could, without aid, have raised incessant armies to defeat" had permitted fearful discord to shake his kingdom. It surely was unnecessary to "threaten all Heaven with wrack and ruin overspread" in order to glorify the Son; and, possessing foreknowledge and omniscience, he did not need to test his loyal host.

Of course the fierce taunts, the scornful boasting follow epic precedent; but the details of the foaming steeds, the gun powder, the mountains and promontories torn up and hurled, consort unpleasantly with our conception of a place ruled over by omniscience and omnipotence, as does also Gabriel's effort to send Satan away from Paradise unchastised, because even though weak he might have damaged Creation - a compromise with the situation which suggests unpleasantly that Satan's damage in Heaven, as on Earth, was done in spite of Divine Will. "God", Himself, who should be calm, certain, tranquil is pictured as at a loss, undecided, distressed by conflicting emotions, till the Son

to appease thy wrath and end the strife
 Of mercy and justice in thy face discerned,
 Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat,
 Second to thee, offered himself to die
 For Man's offence.

In the cases of both Lucifer and Adam, God expected disobedience, and even suggested revolt in his prediction of punishment:

Your head I him appoint
 And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
 All knees in Heaven and shall confess him, Lord -

...

... Him who disobeys
 Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day,
 Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
 Into utter darkness, deep engulfed.

and when we read God's statement:

Under thee as Head Supreme
 Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce
 In Heaven or Earth or Under Earth in Hell,
 we have a brief consciousness of sympathy, or at least understanding, for the rebels. We ourselves object to being
 "reduced",

Later, in Book VIII, 232 ff., Milton again almost forgets God's omnipotence and impresses us with a fretful, irritable God, unduly anxious;

"such command we had

To see that none thence issued forth a spy
Or enemy, while God was in his work,
Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold
Destruction with Creation might have mixed.

and then continues in a hurried and lame attempt to reaffirm God's complete knowledge and control;

Not that they durst without his leave attempt,
But us he sends upon his high behests
For state, as sovran King, and to inure
Our prompt obedience. (Busy work)

"God" is consoled for man's fall in that through heaven and earth His glory will be thereby exalted. Even Christ boasts:

Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
Illustrates, when they see all regal power
Given to me to quell their pride and in event
Know whether I be dextrous to subdue
Thy rebels.

Like Milton, "God" would enjoin adulation; the angels, although possessing free will, adore Him by command. He takes pleasure in "golden Lamps that burn nightly before him (the stars?), in angel choruses and other reflections of the pomp of courts. After the Creation⁵ he caused the harp and other instruments to "have work", and to rest not. He congratulated himself that

Heaven, yet populous, retains
 Number sufficient to possess her realms,
 Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
 With ministeries due and solemm rites.⁶

Even among the angels "prostrations vile" are the vogue. Satan, disguised as a cherub, bowed low to Uriel

As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven
 Where honor due and reverence none neglects.

a fact which causes us to question Satan's assurance to his legions that "orders and degrees jar not with liberty, but well consist"⁷

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5. Paradise Lost, Bk. VII, 594 ff.

6. Ibid., Bk. VII, 147 ff.

7. Ibid., Bk. V, 792.

Milton's love of power, his pleasure in ceremonious subjugation is reflected also in the attitude of Man toward his subject creatures. God says:⁸

I bring them to receive
From thee their names and pay thee fealty
With low subjection.

and Adam beheld the birds and beasts "approaching two and two - these cowering low with blandishment."

Apparently Milton had no confidence in any loyalty except that secured by the rod. One understands better how fearfully Mary Powell must have outraged his dignity when she, his inferior, his subject, had dared to rebel against his authority, and one is inclined to wonder if she was not accorded fitting chastisement for her timerity when she returned to obedience. His reception of her was a matter of scruple with Milton, for he had assumed responsibility for her actions at the time of his marriage and he believed:

God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour
Smile she or lour.⁹

It seems unkind to suspect Milton of having been a petty domestic tyrant; but a man's conception of his God may

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8. Paradise Lost, Bk. VIII, 343 ff.

9. Samson Agonistes, l. 1053 ff.

affect his own character no less than his own character may affect his conception of God. And the speculation would throw light upon his spirited first wife's rebellion against him and upon the awe and fear that took the place of real affection in the hearts of his daughters. Apparently his sympathies were absorbed by his desire to reduce everything to Reason. Emotion, being unintelligent, he discredited, and so His God, a God of Reason, is not distinguished by love, pity, tenderness; and the fall and the redemption become processes governed purely by Reason.

And, after all, how is one to conceive of Pure or Right Reason - and, once conceived, how express it in terms comprehensible to others. Our language, as well as our nature, prohibits us from justifying the ways of God to man.

A curious difficulty Milton encountered in his delineation of God must have been that of reconciling God's omnipresence with his belief that God was "like unto man in all his parts and members", a belief which he discussed at length in the second chapter of the The Christian Doctrine, Book One. There seems to be only one awkward passage caused by this difficulty:

The Filial Power arrived and sat him down
 With his great Father; for He also went
 Invisible, yet stayed (such privilege
 Hath Omnipresence).¹⁰

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10. Paradise Lost, Bk. VII, 587.

HUMAN CHARACTERS

EVE

In Milton's representation of Eve is reverence and dignity. He has followed tradition and his own convictions in making her inferior to Adam; but that station and her lack of immediate worship of her Creator are advantageous to her. For since she was removed from direct responsibility to God, her sin of disobedience was not so great as Adam's would have been had he been first to err. Probably Milton emphasized that Adam was for God only; Eve for God in him in order to soften the enormity of her act.

Thus Paradise Lost is an unconscious commentary on the danger of keeping woman secondary to man, of subjugating the mothers of mankind to any less than God, or at least the angels, and of refusing to elevate her reasoning powers as highly as they might be raised. Eve's very fearlessness of evil is significant of her innocence. Adam urges:

- Nor think superfluous others' aid,
 I from the influence of thy looks receive
 Access in every virtue - in thy sight
 More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
 Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
 Shame to be overcome or overreached
 Would utmost vigour raise.

But Eve is resentful of Adam's care, possibly because Satan had already tainted her mind by whispering in her ear as she slept. She argues well:

his foul esteem

Sticks no dishonor on our front, but turns

Foul on himself

and finally utters Milton's own principle of virtue as expressed in his Areopagitica:¹

And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed

Alone, without exterior help sustained.

Adam reproves her gently:

Not then mistrust, but tender love enjoins

That I should mind thee oft and mind thou me.

Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve,

Since Reason not impossibly may meet

Some specious object by the foe suborned,

And fall into deception unaware,

Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.

Seek not temptation.

To which admonition, Eve, "persistent, yet remiss, replied, "Our trial, when least sought, may find us both far less prepared."

Eve is making the mistake concerning which the elder brother in Comus had spoken. She is wilful and proud. The elder brother had declared that she who had

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1. Areopagitica, I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary.

chastity she might pass through the direst dangers undisturbed,
 "Be it not done in pride or in presumption." Eve, in admitting
 pride, had, it might seem, caught contagion from Satan, whose
 sin was pride. Possibly it was to mitigate her offence that
 Milton made her a victim of Satan's suggestions while she lay
 asleep, helpless to resist them. The next morning, Adam
 found.²

unawakened Eve

With tresses discomposed and glowing cheek,

As through unquiet rest.

(surely the first instance of unquiet rest in Paradise and
 therefore recognized with remarkable astuteness) and found
 that she had dreamed:

But of offence and trouble, which my mind

Knew never till this irksome night.

Her petulance is alarming. She complains:

If this be our condition, thus to dwell

In narrow circuit, straitened by our Foe

Subtle or violent, we not endued

Single with like defence wherever met,

How are we happy still in fear of harm?³

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2. Paradise Lost, Bk. V - 9 ff.

3. Ibid., Bk. IX, 322-326.

(which reminds us that Milton himself had described Satan's role as being;

To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good angels guard by special grace.

and makes us condone Eve's weakness even more generously. In her dreams she had tasted the fulfillment of ambition for godlike power. Her immediate reaction to this sin had been terror and distaste. So zealous was she not to offend that she even wept in her pious fear that she had done so, however innocently. The tragedy begins to develop swiftly. She looks to Adam for confirmation of her mental dishonor. He is her arbiter. But Adam is set upon soothing her distress, and condones the evil from which she has recoiled, explaining that:

Evil into the mind of God or Man
 May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
 No spot or blame behind.

Eve is unable to follow his reasoning, but the force of her initial recoil from disobedience to God is lost. Satan was already securing advantage, for his second suggestion that she might become the equal of the Deity, a suggestion the more powerful because it appealed to a weakness, vanity, which had marked her from her creation. Adam's attitude was blameless. Being himself ignorant of all offence and

trouble, he could not advise his ward. He puzzled over Eve's display of restlessness and irritability - never before demonstrated - and finally indulged them, not recognizing them as danger signals.

Thus innocence, or ignorance of evil, is made its own destroyer. Had Eve known the nature of evil and how to combat it, as had the lady of Comus, she might have resisted it as successfully. She had not even heard Raphael's warning against the folly and danger of random speculation, which might have aided her to resist a vain desire to become like God, knowing all things. Even in Book IV, l. 657, she had shown a disposition, like Adam's, to be intellectually curious. She had declared:

God is thy law, thou mine, to know no more

Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.

but in the same speech had demanded:

But wherefore all night long shine these?

(stars) for whom

This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut
all eyes?

Adam, likewise, had prepared slowly for his disobedience. In the first place, he permitted a sense of injured pride to cause him to forget, at a critical hour, his office of intellectual guide and physical protector,

demonstrating that emotion has somewhat overcome reason, and his love has conquered his sense of responsibility. His "Go, for thy stay, not free, absents thee more," is eloquent of a sense of injury that nullifies all the arguments his intelligence has suggested. The burden of responsibility for women, which Adam has assumed, makes the blame for her misconduct revert to him. When, in Book XI, 632 ff., he offered to complain:

But still I see the tenor of man's woe

Hold on the same, from woman to begin,

the angel rebuked him sharply:

"From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,"

Said the angel, "who should better hold his
place

By wisdom and superior gifts received."

Adam's first reaction to Eve's misdeed was horror and regret that one so excellent should fall so low. His sorrowful emphasis upon her excellence so enhanced it (already unduly exalted) that he contemplated dying with her rather than he should lose her. That his reasoning powers were impaired is evidenced by the fact that he was not overwhelmed with the hideousness of rebellion. He even reasoned that eating the fruit could be no sin since:

1. The serpent, having eaten, had taken away
the curse.
2. God would not destroy anything he had loved
so well.
3. God would not let His Adversary triumph over
Him and despoil His Creation.
4. He (Adam) would prefer death with Eve to
Paradise without her.

Each argument was weaker than the preceding one, yet they convinced him. Eve accepted his sacrifice hypocritically. She lied when she said: "Were it I thought death menaced would ensue this my attempt, I would sustain alone the worst"; for it was just that fear which had decided her to share the fruit with Adam. She had thought of the desirability of being his superior (unexpectedly shrewd insight on the part of Milton); then the reflection had followed:⁴

But what if God have seen,
And death ensue? Then I shall be no more;
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct!
A death to think! Confirmed then, I resolve
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe.
So dear I love him that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life.

.....

4. Paradise Lost, Bk. IX, 826.

This passage is eloquent of masculine persuasion concerning the workings of the female mind. Few women have the ardently possessive attitude in marriage that most men credit them with owning. Such extreme jealousy, as an indication of excelling love, as well as the tremendous solace of her husband's society are conventional and slightly absurd. But we recognize the fact that Eve's spiritual deterioration is proceeding rapidly. Her treachery, jealousy, falseness are all stigmata of spiritual decay. The fruit has had its effect. The change from the Eve who had considered herself happiest because "enjoying Thee (Adam) preeminent by so much odds" to the Eve who complained, "Inferior, who is free?" is impressive. Milton, the husband of a rebellious wife and the father of rebellious daughters is wistfully noting the dissolution of Paradise.

Another sign of Eve's fall is the development of idolatry. She assured the true that it should be her early care, "not withoug song, each morning, and due praise," and finally:

So saying, from the Tree her step she turned,
But first low reverence done as to the Power
That dwelt within.

The last stage of the degeneration of our first parents was their sinking, unresisting, below the level of

the beasts they had despised, "of their mutual guilt the seal, the solace of their sin." But with their degradation came the realization of their depraved condition. Eve, the first to sin, was also first in her unselfish concern for another's misery. It is possible that Milton considered her deficient in comprehension of the situation. Adam, with his higher reason, comprehending all, is slow to adjust himself to the cruel change in their condition. He first suggested prayer.

HUMAN CHARACTERS.

ADAM

In the character of Adam one would expect to find as nearly a conscious self-portrait as Milton would permit himself. Adam is pure and upright, noble and beloved of God. And yet, he is of the dust; his strength is founded upon weakness. Not prone to sin, he has, still, a slightly sinful nature. His moral strength is in its infancy, and must be especially guarded by God and good angels.

The most outstanding characteristic of Adam is mental activity. He possesses an inquiring mind from his very creation. His first words are a question - a seeking after first origins and a desire to know God. Mental more than physical hunger seems to be his law of life. Raphael, who admits¹ that "whatever was created needs to be sustained and fed", finds it necessary to warn his charge:

But Knowledge is as food and needs no less

Her temperance over appetite to know.

His expressed delight in his conversation with the "pure Intelligence of Heaven, Angel serene, suggests intellectual longing:

For while I sit with thee, I seem in Heaven,

And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear

Than fruits of palm-tree, pleasantest to thirst

And hunger both from labour at the hour

.....

1. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, 414.

Of sweet repast. They satiate and soon fill
 Though pleasant: but thy words with grace divine
 Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.

His speculation on Death is reminiscent of Hamlet's soliloquy on the same subject, and is significantly comparable to the reflections of Belial (whose reason is most seriously corrupted) on annihilation.

Belial had exclaimed:

Thus repulsed, our final hope
 Is flat despair: we must exasperate
 The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage:
 And that must end us; that must be our cure.
 But Adam, still sheltered by God's providence

concludes:

Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
 Of misery, so thinking to evade
 The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God
 Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire than so
 To be forestalled. Much more I fear lest death
 So snatched will not exempt us from the pain
 We are by doom to pay. Rather such acts
 Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
 To make death in us live.

It is, of course, possible that he is imagining that Death, as in Book XI, l. 491 would shake his dart over the suicide, yet delay to strike, since in Book I, Chapter XIII of The Christian Doctrine, Milton had argued that the spirit as well as the body died and would be resurrected, declaring there is:

no reason why, if God

has sentenced to death the whole of man
that sinned, the spirit, which is the part
principally offending, should be alone
exempt from the appointed punishment.

and adding that this spiritual death should occur "especially since, previous to the entrance of sin into the world, all parts of man were alike immortal".

The forbidden tree was well named, "Knowledge of Good and Evil" and God's warning to guard against curiosity:

"in the day thou eat'st, thou diest
Death is the penalty imposed; beware,
And govern well thy appetite (to know)

was echoed by Raphael:

Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid;
Leave them to God above; him serve and fear

...

Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
Live, in what state, condition, or degree,

Contented that thus far hath been revealed

Not of earth only, but of highest Heaven.

Adam recognizes that "man hath his daily work of body or mind appointed, which declares his dignity" ² and recognizes

That not to know at large of things remote

From use, obscure and subtle, but to know

That which before us lies in daily life

Is the prime wisdom.

God has bid dwell far off all anxious cares

And not molest us unless we ourselves

Seek them with wandering thoughts and notions

vain.

The angel almost exceeded his office, when instructing his host, however, for his story was disturbing to Man. It was necessary for him (even then) to disabuse his mind of skepticism; but being uncorrupted,

Adam soon repelled

The doubts that in his heart arose, and now

Led on, yet sinless with desire to know

What nearer might concern him

sought to master the secrets of the origin of earth, air, space, stars, an appetite which Raphael consents to gratify within bounds. These were subjects of extreme interest to the savants of Milton's period, and regarded by many as of

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sinful concern. Raphael does not enlighten Adam as to the Copernician astrology, but he frames the theory as a suggestion in his description of the creation of the world, and Adam is gratefully appreciative that the thirst he had of knowledge has been thus largely allayed.³ From his enthusiasm, self-confidence, eagerness, sweetness, one catches the impression of youthful exuberance. His whole-souled devotion to Eve is boyish, and one notices the effect of a mature man's reminiscence of his youthful piety in Milton's wistful lines;

Tell me how may I know him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and live
And feel that I am happier than I know?

Adam, like Milton delighted in music. The highest expression of his pleasure in his heavenly visitant's conversation is made when he exclaims:⁴

Thy words
Attentive and with more delighted ear,
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
Cherubic songs by night from neighboring hills
Aerial music send.

The sweetness of such music is described in many passages.

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3. Paradise Lost, Bk. VIII, 7 ff.

4. Ibid., Bk. V, 544 ff.

The reflection in Adam of Milton's sense of male superiority, expressly stated in Chapter XV of the second book of the Christian Doctrine has already been noted, as has been also the parallel between Milton's fondness for Nature and that of Adam. Aubrey says, "after dinner he used to walk three or four hours at a time (he always had a garden where he lived) and we know that he remained for eight years at his "pretty little garden house in Petty-France". One imagines his gardens as having been always neatly trimmed and trained, with neat borders and clipped hedges. Adam's energies in the Garden of Eden are even bent toward subduing nature. Even before the Fall, he is engaged in that perpetual warfare with her that has marked man's relations with her since.

One wonders if in Adam's surprise at the ability of Eve to discourse intelligently, Milton expressed a personal experience. Defoe, in his essay, On Education of Women, declared that in the seventeenth century the most cultured ladies had comparatively untrained minds; but the daughter of Dr. Davis, whom Milton had at one time considered as a supplanter of Mary Powell-Milton was. a "very handsome and witty gentlewoman", and the lady Margaret Lee, who had a particular honor for him", was a woman of great wit and ingenuity.

Adam marvelled at the social pleasures of discourse,
and exclaimed of Eve:⁵

All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses, discountenanced, and like Folly shows.
Authority and Reason on her wait
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally.

And the angel is allowed to approve Man's content in her conversation.

What higher in her society thou find'st
Attractive, human, rational, love still
In loving thou do'st well.

Between Eve's coyness at her first meeting with Adam and Milton's acceptance of the seventeenth century's standards of female propriety there is a close parallel. Eve had explained to her husband that her retreat from his advances had been due to the fact that she preferred another companion to him, the "watery image" of the pool; but Adam with delightful masculine egotism, ignored her explanation, and regarded her shyness as provocative.

Although he knew her divinely instructed (an exceptional grace for poor Eve) in what was honor, and divinely brought, yet Adam, with worldly sophistication, believed her modesty required that she be wooed and pled with, conscious that she should be:

Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired

The more desirable.

A bit of coquetry that is entirely out of keeping with her innocence and dignity, however charming it might appear to the Adams of the modern world.

Of the similarity between Adam's reconciliation to Eve and Milton's to Mary Powell, many commentators have spoken. With the eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree, came a realization of the bliss they had forfeited. Regret brought tears and mutual hatred, but eventually readjustment was granted them and Adam was given further information, to guide his steps in the world outside Paradise. He resigned his "high thoughts" and humbled, declared:⁶

Greatly instructed I shall hence depart

Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill

Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain,

Beyond which was my folly to aspire.

Henceforth I learn that to obey is best.

The angel approved his words:

This having learned, thou hast attained the sum

Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars

Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers,

All secrets of the Deep, all Nature's works

.....

6. Paradise Lost, Bk. XII, 557.

Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,
 And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst
 And all the rule of one empire. Only add
 Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith
 Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love
 By name to come dalled Charity, the soul
 Of all the rest: Then wilt thou not be loth
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
 A Paradise within thee, happier far.

This last line suggests daringly one solution of the mystery of God's purpose, an idea common in modern literature - the suggestion that out of sin may come progress. In Samson Agonistes God is justified for sending punishment inasmuch as through suffering man learns what he could not otherwise have realized. Those free from suffering pile up their own doom; those afflicted with it amass strength and understanding of how to use that strength and of how to avoid pitfalls.

The good that sin may accomplish has already been enjoyed, however and Milton would not leave us unwarned:

Let none herceforth seek needless cause to approve
 The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
 Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.

CONCLUSION

Examination, then, of the text of Paradise Lost would seem to justify the persuasion that John Milton, distinguished primarily by a mighty intellect, was fascinated by the ways of Divine Providence, as he recognized them, and most probably at some time was drawn into some effort to comprehend the Deity. That he believed some scrutiny permitted man is indicated by God's indulgent query of Adam:

What think'st thou then of Me, and this my state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
Of happiness, or not, who am alone
From all eternity?

But that he believed it fraught with deadly danger is shown by the many prohibitions throughout Paradise Lost.

Save for this one restraint, he trusted his reason to control his life, and indulged his intellectual curiosity. That he profoundly believed that God had divinely endowed him with especial mental power and especial favor witness his invocations to the Heavenly Spirit in the invocations that begin various books of his great poem. A part of that confidence in God's grace sprang from a consciousness of a life spent in His presence. From this belief in a special

mission developed a passionate need for freedom of opinion (the type of freedom that the seventeenth century viewed with most suspicion) and a sincere conviction of personal greatness. Sensitive and haughty, he had been keenly alive to the sneers he had endured at various times in his career, and with his hope of reward for a life well-spent, he probably cherished a corresponding hope for revenge.

The emphasis he placed upon reason caused him to regard self-mastery as the chief source, after faith, of salvation, and strengthened his mighty will. Nature, music, all loveliness awoke response in him, but never were allowed to transport him beyond the dominion of his reason. By careful analysis of the message of the Bible his reason caused him to arrive at the conclusion that the body and spirit were essentially akin, and that, especially in view of the fact that the spirit had been first to err, both were capable of death and corruption, just as both might be redeemed into life everlasting.

Finally, history has not left us a record of a more attractive and inspiring character than that of Milton. He united a keen sense of aesthetic attractiveness with a high regard for moral beauty and a profound intellectual capacity. If with these gifts in such august degree he also combined a few traits that we dare to regard as weaknesses, the taint of earth reduces him only to a level whereon we

may dare to love him, a brother man, struggling like the rest of mankind to set up an ideal standard which is and ought to be a little above his head.

Who shall understand his errors?

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